Volume 25, No. 14, May 11, 2018

Nation

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Photo by Marija Krivokapic

HAPPY GOOSE BREAK

BEESUM communications

Editorial

Lessons I have learned

by Will Nicholls

As Snoopy in the Peanuts comic strip would write, "It was a dark and stormy night." It was dark and stormy last February on the evening I was hit by a car. I realized the car wasn't going to miss me, so I jumped in the air. It was either that or be dragged underneath. As a result, the bumper hit my left ankle, dislocating and breaking it. I tried to get up as the pain wasn't evident at first. I fell, looked down and thought, "Damn!" (paraphrased) as I realized that my foot was facing the wrong way.

You have weird thoughts at a time like this. One of them was that I could understand how an athlete could finish the game with a broken bone. An ambulance took me to the Hôpital Jean-Talon where some of the staff spoke no English and my smattering of French didn't extend to most things medical. I spent the rest of the week at the hospital eating the blandest food imaginable. One night I phoned Lyle Stewart and begged him to bring me some food with taste. It was a Micky D's Crispy Chicken Trio that I devoured like a starving, slavering dog.

My adventure with vehicles didn't stop there though. At the local Provigo I used an electric cart they had available for handicapped people like me. The first time was without incident. The second time, I used a different model. It was fine until I took it loaded with groceries down an escalator to the basement garage. I discovered there were no brakes, toggling reverse did nothing, and the stop button didn't stop the runaway cart.

Yelling shiiiiit, I flew like a bat out of hell down the escalator on my personal luge. I remember seeing glimpses of shocked faces as I sped downward. Of course, waiting at the bottom were all the last-chance bargains that stores use to entice shoppers to spend a few more dollars. Somehow by the grace of a higher deity I managed to steer through them. The last obstacle was the smoke shop with its glass walls. I desperately steered and made it through the door and angled the cart into the cash register counter. Sliding along the counter, the store's back wall finally stopped my mad dash.

A shaken employee asked me if I was okay. I truthfully answered that I wasn't sure as I had taken a heavy-duty pain killer about 20 minutes earlier. Several more concerned staff members arrived to see if I had survived intact. One of them said he had never seen anyone travel that fast down the escalator before.

Later, I would see a warning on the cart saying not to use it on the escalator – but it was only in French.

So what lessons did I learn from all this? The first one is that no matter how old you are you still must be careful when crossing the road. The second one is that cold water can be a luxury. So, if you have a friend, family member or someone you care for with limited mobility, please make sure they have access to a cold drink. Yes, you can drink warm water but it's not as nice. And thirdly, the laws on French should not apply in situations concerning health, safety or the well-being of any person.

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News

An empowering network

Reviewing the progress made by the Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network

by Amy German

A decade ago, Nakuset, the Executive Director of the Montreal Native Women's Shelter, took it upon herself to gather together as many Native groups as possible to see what issues could be address and goals accomplished by working together. Today, the Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network is a working reality.

At the time, her goal was to have some influence at Batshaw Youth and Family Services because Indigenous children were frequently being separated from their families. As a result, those families had difficulties keeping children connected with their culture. Social workers may not have understood some of behaviours, which, in many cases, was appropriate within the context of the child's reserve or territory but deemed inappropriate when taken out of that context. Often the result was that these children would be deprived of their culture and frequently punished for the way they were raised.

This was something Nakuset would witness firsthand as Indigenous women transitioned out of the shelter. Often destitute and starting over from scratch, these women would need proper housing or face having their children placed in the system. Once there, the same cycle of cultural genocide would begin all over again.

Having seen this played out many times, Nakuset brought together various Indigenous organizations to see if she could get the word out that Indigenous foster parents were needed and, when they couldn't find any, she created a guide for foster parents of other backgrounds about Indigenous children so that their behaviour wouldn't be misunderstood.

On April 24, Nakuset looked around the room at a conference at UQAM where recommendations and strategic plans were being presented by Percolab, a consulting company that spent the last six months conferring with all the groups that participate in the Network. She said she was amazed at how far the Network had come in the last 10 years.

"When I look at everything that we have accomplished, it's insane what we have done and are able to now do," said Nakuset. "When we started this movement there weren't the same kinds of advances that we now have now in terms of media. Today we have a higher presence, thanks to Twitter and other social media."

As for Batshaw, she said that while it was a tough nut to crack, like any of the initiatives the Network has been working on, they have to be Native-led. Getting Indigenous people to get involved in politics and other leadership positions is what will effect change.

While the Network had earlier made a deal with Service de police de la Ville de Montréal to consult with Indigenous groups when dealing with Indigenous people, the SPVM didn't keep their promise.

"We are supposed to have this comité autochtone and we are supposed to hold the police accountable, but the whole thing has been bullshit. Now Marie-Ève Bordeleau is on that committee and she is going to run it, so now we will see change. This is what the Network is all about. It is always changing. We see a lot more Indigenous people in leadership roles. I run a shelter but I am not in a leadership position, but now Marie-Ève is," said Nakuset.

After winning last November's municipal election, Mayor Valérie Plante named Bordeleau as Montreal's Commissioner of Indigenous Affairs. And, the hope is that other Indigenous youth will follow in her footsteps and take positions of power to represent Indigenous peoples so they can have a say and that say will carry weight.

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Justice and Correctional Services
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In Brief

Call for **papal apology**

The House of Commons voted overwhelmingly May 1 to call for an apology from Pope Francis for the hand the Catholic Church had in the creation and operation of residential schools in Canada. MPs voted 269-10 for the motion introduced by Timmins–James Bay MP Charlie Angus. The 10 opposed were all Conservative MPs from Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and one from Saskatchewan.

The motion calls on the church to respect its moral and financial obligations in the 2006 Residential Schools Agreement. To date, the church has failed to fulfill its obligations of a $25 million settlement for survivors of the residential-school system, outlined in the agreement.

Mistissini **bust**

Mistissini's Eeyou Eenou Police made a major strike in their war against drugs April 29.

Armed with a search warrant, police searched a house and arrested a 27-year-old Mistissini resident, seizing about 300 grams of white powder alleged to be cocaine, 150 grams of green substance alleged to be marijuana, 53 grams of psilocybin mushrooms, 30 grams of crystalline substance alleged to be MDMA, and approximately $6,000 in cash alleged to be obtained through criminal activity.

Police say the seized substances have an estimated street value of $40,000. The suspect appeared before a judge on April 30 for a preliminary hearing.

The Eeyou Eenou Police Force would like to express their appreciation to its Mistissini community members for doing their part in the fight against drugs in Eeyou Istchee.

Lead shot in the **crosshairs**

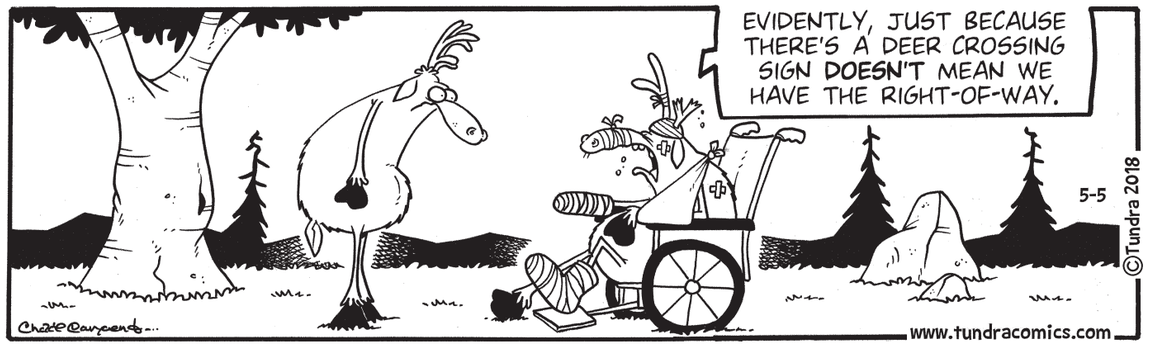
Cree and Inuit groups in Quebec have joined scientists, health professionals and environmentalists to ask Canada to ban lead ammunition and fishing tackle. The group wrote an open letter to Environment Minister Catherine McKenna saying something concrete must be done. The use of lead is "causing serious harm" and they say simply asking people not to use it hasn't worked.

Paul Linton, assistant director of public health, said the Crees eat a lot of small game, and are thus directly impacted by the harmful effects of lead shot. Lead poisoning is particularly harmful to children, affecting the development of the brain and nervous system.

The Cree Health Board is engaged in a public education campaign that they hope will convince hunters to change to safer ammunition.

But Linton says it's a hard sell because the price of lead shot is still cheaper than steel shot. Steel shot can be twice as expensive.

Environment and Climate Change Canada released two studies in early April. One forecasts the amount of lead from ammunition, fishing sinkers and jigs released into the environment will rise from 5,000 tonnes in 2016 to 5,800 tonnes in 2025.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5-5
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THE TOURIST TRAIN

by Dan Isaac & Amy German

As the snow melts and spring becomes a certainty here in Montreal, people are emerging from hibernation, losing layers and getting out to enjoy what the city has to offer.

While warm weather might still be a few weeks away in Eeyou Istchee, it's never too early to plan your summer getaway down south. So pack your bags, bring the kids – or drop them off at Gookum's – on your way to hop the Nation's annual tourist train in and around Montreal.

Photo by Tim Snow

THE BIG EVENT | AUGUST 3-5

OSHEAGA

The crown jewel of Quebec's summer music festival circuit returns to Montreal for its 13th incarnation. And as always, this year's lineup spans the musical spectrum and features some notable acts in almost every genre you can think of. Performers include: Post Malone, Arctic Monkeys, Florence + the Machine, Tyler, The Creator, Odesza and the Yeah Yeah Yeahs.

Once again, this year's Osheaga will be presented in Parc Jean-Drapeau's Gilles Villeneuve racetrack, as construction of a 65,000-capacity amphitheatre at Parc Jean-Drapeau on Île Sainte-Hélène continues.

But if it's anything like last year, that won't be a problem. The Villeneuve grounds feature a sprawling musical landscape, with a section for shopping and games, a designated EDM area, as well as child-care options a short walk away from the main stages.

It's always a great time and the Nation will once again be present at the event. So drop us a line if you're heading down for the show!

osheaga.com

THE BIG RACE | JUNE 8-10

GRAND PRIX WEEKEND

Formula 1's Canadian Grand Prix and all the festivities that come with it take over Montreal's Circuit Gilles-Villeneuve at Parc Jean-Drapeau, as well as a large chunk of downtown between Peel and Crescent streets. While the massive crowds and noisy party-goers can be a bit much, the race itself guarantees excitement for motor-sport enthusiasts.

With speeds up to 375 km/h, F1 cars are the fastest road-racing vehicles in the world. The Grand Prix allows you to get up-close-and-personal with the cars and their drivers. You'll also run into car enthusiasts from around the world who bring their fancy, souped-up rides to show them off throughout the weekend.

grandprixmontreal.com

THE BIG BANG | JULY 7 – AUGUST 8

FIREWORKS COMPETITION

Montreal will again become the center of the comedy universe when Just for Laughs comes to town for two and a half weeks in July. July 27 will see one of Comedy's biggest names, Kevin Hart, take the stage at the Bell Centre for his Irresponsible Tour.

Other big names gracing the festival stages include, Jo Koy, Jimmy car and international sensation and Daily Show host Trevor Noah.

And while the big stages and concerts get the most attention, being in the city for the festival and attending some of the smaller shows can turn into the best stories. It's become something of a tradition for A-list Comics to surprise audiences with impromptu sets at more intimate venues. So, if you do make the trip, you could end up seeing your favourite comic for five bucks in a coffee shop or bar.

hahaha.ca

THE BIG HAHA | JULY 11-29

JUST FOR LAUGHS

Montreal will again become the centre of the comedy universe when Just for Laughs rolls into town for two-and-a-half weeks in July. July 27 will see one of comedy's biggest names, Kevin Hart, take the stage at the Bell Centre for his Irresponsible Tour.

Other well-known comics gracing the festival stages include Jo Koy, Jimmy Carr and Daily Show host Trevor Noah.

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hahaha.ca

BEER FEST (JUNE 6-9)

From novices to beer connoisseurs, the Festival mondiale de la bière promises a little something for everyone. Since 1994, Montreal's international beer festival has been bringing together the finest brews from around the world for people 18 and up. And this year, the festival will once again be held in Montreal's Palais des congrès, with an outdoor patio as well.

On top of whites, wheats, lagers, blondes, ambers, pilsners and IPAs from large breweries and small-craft producers, the four-day event boasts free admission, beer alternatives like cider and Twisted Tea as well as an excellent selection of pub food.

festivalmondialbiere.qc.ca

COMICON (JULY 6-8)

Cosplayers from across the province and beyond will invade Montreal for Comiccon in early July. The family-friendly event, in a way, offers everyone a second chance at Halloween as people dress up as their favourite super-hero or movie character.

The event includes a slew of guest speakers and themed events held throughout the city during the weekend. It's sure to be some fun for the kid in everyone. And as silly as it sounds, it's a great place to get the kids interested in reading.

montrealcomiccon.com

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HEAVY MONTREAL (JULY 28-29)

After a hiatus in 2017, Heavy Montreal returns to Parc Jean-Drapeau "stronger than ever". The festival, again, will present a range of hard rock, metal, punk and other hardcore sounds with notable artists this year including Marilyn Manson, Rob Zombie and Tech N9ne.

An ideal environment for metal-heads to let loose free of judgement, to mosh head-bang and rock out, Heavy Montreal will also bring back staple side-attractions like the Heavy Mania Wrestling tournament.

heavymontreal.com

PRESENCE AUTOCHTONE (AUGUST 7-15)

Montreal's festival for all things Indigenous will set up in the Quartier des Spectacles and other venues around the city August 7-15. Over the course of eight days the First People's festival features film screenings, music performances, cultural displays and Indigenous ceremonies under the sign of meeting and respecting differences. The full programming will be announced soon.

presenceautochtone.ca

MONTREAL PRIDE (AUGUST 9-19)

One of the international LGBTQ community's favourite Pride festivals takes place in Montreal August 9-19.

Pride Week celebrations start with dance parties across the city and culminate with the annual parade but there are dozens of activities and events scheduled every day of the fest.

Annual events include a family-friendly Community Day and the Mega T-Dance, a huge celebration held right after the Montreal Pride Parade. And while a route for the parade hasn't been announced, it's sure to parallel last year's celebrations in size and length.

fiertemontrealpride.com

Photo by Catherine Quinn

THE BIG DRUM | JULY 14-15

KAHNAWAKE POWWOW

The Echoes of a Proud Nation Powwow will again be hosted on the Kahnawake powwow ground July 14-15.

Now in its 28th year, the powwow offers an arts-and-crafts exhibit, delicious food vendors, as well as world-class dancing and hand-drumming competitions and plenty of other Mohawk ceremonies and traditions spread out over the two days of festivities.

A $4 shuttle bus service is available to the site from the Angrignon metro station and admission costs $8 for the general public and $4 for seniors while children under 5 years old enter for free. Follow their Facebook page for upcoming announcements.

kahnawakepowwow.com/

Advertorial by CBHSSJB

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- Chisasibi to Montreal: 3 direct flights per week with stretcher
- Chisasibi to Chibougamau: daily direct flights Monday to Friday
- Chisasibi arrivals: before lunch
- Montreal arrivals: before dinner

Aircraft #1 DASH 8-100 (capacity 36 seats)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
	Flight #235 **MTL** 7:15 ⟶ **V-d'OR** 8:30		*Flight #235* **MTL** 7:15 ⟶ **V-d'OR** 8:30			
Flight #203 **MTL** 8:25 ⟶ **V-d'OR** 9:50	*Flight #235* **V-d'OR** 8:55 ⟶ **WASKA** 10:05	*Flight #203* **MTL** 8:25 ⟶ **V-d'OR** 9:50	*Flight #235* **V-d'OR** 8:55 ⟶ **WASKA** 10:05	*Flight #203* **MTL** 8:25 ⟶ **V-d'OR** 9:50		*Flight #205* **MTL** 9:00 ⟶ **V-d'OR** 10:25
Flight #203 **V-d'OR** 10:15 ⟶ **CHIS** 12:00	*Flight #235* **WASKA** 10:25 ⟶ **CHIS** 11:10	*Flight #203* **V-d'OR** 10:15 ⟶ **CHIS** 12:00	*Flight #235* **WASKA** 10:25 ⟶ **CHIS** 11:10	*Flight #203* **V-d'OR** 10:15 ⟶ **CHIS** 12:00	**NO**	*Flight #205* **V-d'OR** 10:50 ⟶ **WHAPMA** 13:00
Flight #238 **CHIS** 12:30 ⟶ **CHIB** 14:05	*Flight #236* **CHIS** 11:40 ⟶ **V-d'OR** 13:15	*Flight #238* **CHIS** 12:30 ⟶ **CHIB** 14:05	*Flight #236* **CHIS** 11:40 ⟶ **V-d'OR** 13:15		**FLIGHTS**	*Flight #206* **WHAPMA** 13:30 ⟶ **CHIS** 14:05
	Flight #236 **V-d'OR** 13:40 ⟶ **CHIB** 14:30		*Flight #236* **V-d'OR** 13:40 ⟶ **CHIB** 14:30	*Flight #204* **CHIS** 13:45 ⟶ **V-d'OR** 15:20		*Flight #206* **CHIS** 14:30 ⟶ **V-d'OR** 16:05
Flight #238 **CHIB** 14:30 ⟶ **MTL** 15:45	*Flight #236* **CHIB** 15:00 ⟶ **MTL** 16:05	*Flight #238* **CHIB** 14:30 ⟶ **MTL** 15:45	*Flight #236* **CHIB** 15:00 ⟶ **MTL** 16:05	*Flight #204* **V-d'OR** 15:40 ⟶ **MTL** 16:45		*Flight #206* **V-d'OR** 16:30 ⟶ **MTL** 17:35

Aircraft #2 DASH 8-100 (capacity 30 seats and stretcher)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Flight #231 **MTL** 7:30 ⟶ **CHIB** 8:55	*Flight #237* **MTL** 7:30 ⟶ **CHIB** 8:55	*Flight #231* **MTL** 7:30 ⟶ **CHIB** 8:55	*Flight #237* **MTL** 7:30 ⟶ **CHIB** 8:55	*Flight #237* **MTL** 7:30 ⟶ **CHIB** 8:55		
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Flight #204 **CHIS** 13:45 ⟶ **V-d'OR** 15:20		*Flight #204* **CHIS** 13:45 ⟶ **V-d'OR** 15:20				
Flight #204 **V-d'OR** 15:40 ⟶ **MTL** 16:45		*Flight #204* **V-d'OR** 15:40 ⟶ **MTL** 16:45				

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Val-d'Or Airport
819-825-8355

CHISASIBI (CHIS)
Robert Kanatewat Airport
819-855-2715

CHIBOUGAMAU (CHIB)
Chibougamau Airport
418-748-3764

WASKAGANISH (WASKA)
Waskaganish Airport
819-895-8876

WHAPMAGOOSTUI (WHAPMA)
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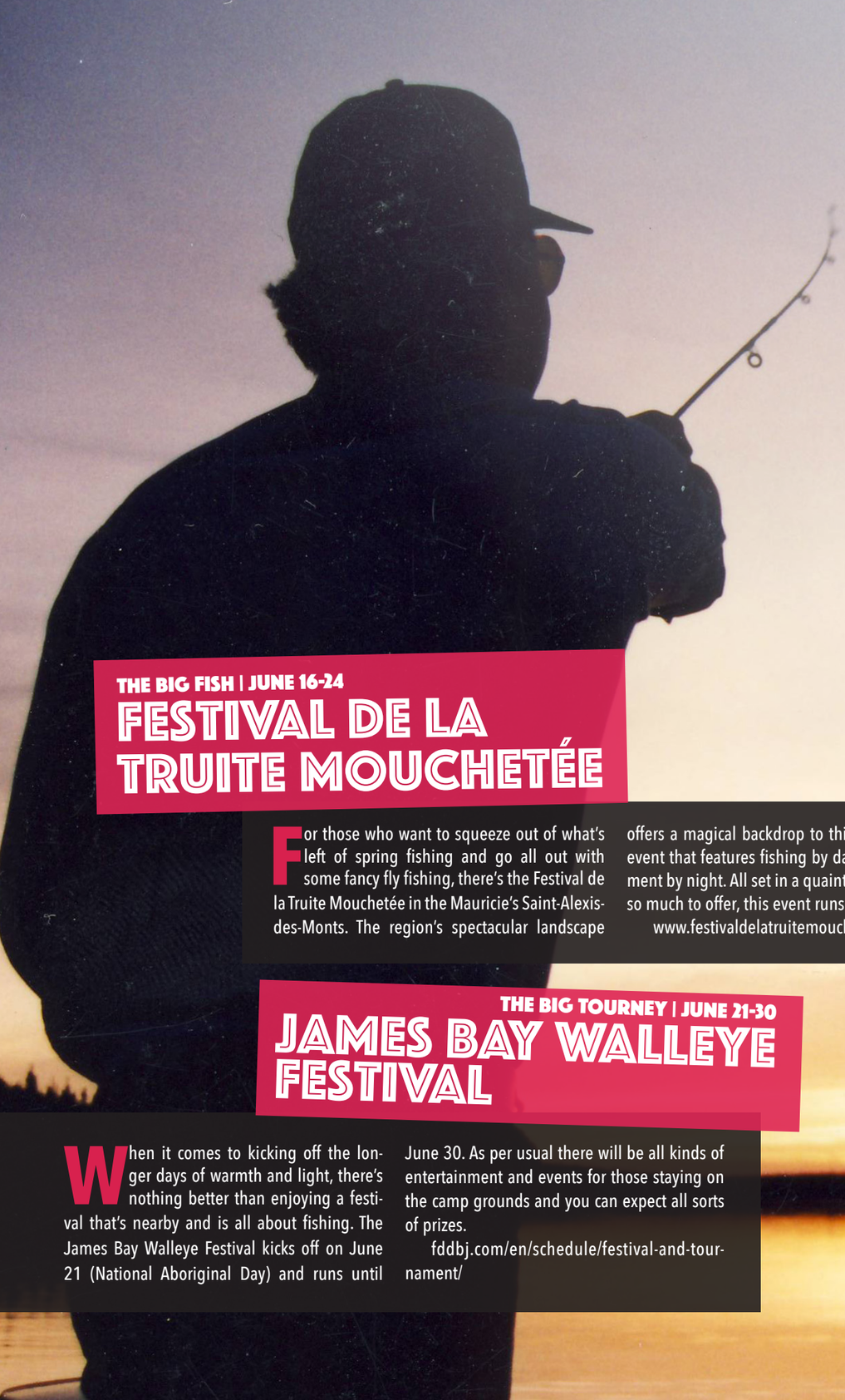
819-929-3646



THE BIG FISH | JUNE 16-24

FESTIVAL DE LA TRUITE MOUCHETÉE

For those who want to squeeze out of what's left of spring fishing and go all out with some fancy fly fishing, there's the Festival de la Truite Mouchetée in the Mauricie's Saint-Alexis-des-Monts. The region's spectacular landscape offers a magical backdrop to this family-friendly event that features fishing by day and entertainment by night. All set in a quaint small town with so much to offer, this event runs June 16-24.

www.festivaldelatruitemouchetee.com

THE BIG TOURNEY | JUNE 21-30

JAMES BAY WALLEYE FESTIVAL

When it comes to kicking off the longer days of warmth and light, there's nothing better than enjoying a festival that's nearby and is all about fishing. The James Bay Walleye Festival kicks off on June 21 (National Aboriginal Day) and runs until June 30. As per usual there will be all kinds of entertainment and events for those staying on the camp grounds and you can expect all sorts of prizes.

fddbj.com/en/schedule/festival-and-tournament/

FESTIVAL D'HUMOUR (JULY 3-8)

A longtime favourite in the North, Val-d'Or's Festival d'humour de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue is back again to provide several days of jokes July 3-8.

Whether you speak French or not, there's lots of fun to be had at this festival.

And once again, they are bringing in an English-speaking performer, Kevin Stobo from Edmonton. Taking in a show in French is not a bad thing, because it's a great motivator to polish up on your French skills.

www.festivaldhumour.com/

TREMBLANT INTERNATIONAL BLUES FESTIVAL (JULY 5-16)

If you crave a resort vacation and want to keep it in Quebec, you can bring the whole fam-jam down to Mont-Tremblant's celebrated blues fest. Drawing in big name performers and offering luxurious accommodations, there are plenty of attractions for kids during the day, spectacular restaurants come dinner time and then sizzling acts come nightfall. Running July 5-16, Tremblant is known for its golf courses, boutiques, adventure sports for kids and a beach for those who love to make sand castles.

https://blues.tremblant.ca/en/

AUGUST FESTIVAL (AUGUST 2-5)

Want to keep the fun local, then check out Chibougamau's annual summer festival August 2-5. Featuring live music, beach volleyball, a triathlon and an arts exhibition, this event has something to offer everyone in the family.

www.ville.chibougamau.qc.ca/loisirs/agenda/2018/festival-en-aout-2018/?c=1

TRUCK RODEO (AUGUST 3-5)

Of course, if you really want to attend the social event of the year in Quebec's north you can hold on to your frigging hats and enjoy Truck Rodeo in Notre-Dame-du-Nord (Abitibi). If big trucks are your thing, here's a festival that features nightly entertainment and fun for kids during the day. The Truck Rodeo features contests, prizes, music, games, and monstrous trucks billowing black smoke August 3-5.

http://elrodeo.com/en/

OSISKO FESTIVAL EN LUMIERE (AUGUST 9-11)

Running August 9-11, the Festival Osisko en Lumière pairs the live music of up-and-coming artists with fireworks displays. There is no other event in Quebec like this – an intense experience for your eyes and ears. This year's event will feature a wide variety of artists from Quebec and abroad, bringing together both francophone and anglophone bands for three consecutive nights that will feature three performances per night. Each night will also be capped off by dance parties featuring live DJ sets. As Rouyn-Noranda's hottest attraction of the summer, be sure not to miss this spectacular festival of sound and vision.

www.osiskoenlumiere.com

If you crave a resort vacation and want to keep it in Quebec, you can bring the whole fam-jam down to Mont-Tremblant's celebrated blues fest.

northern healing

by Andrés G. Griborio-Guzmán,
as told to Ana P. Castillo-Méndez

Andrés G. Griborio-Guzmán is a McGill University M.D., C.M. candidate in the class of 2019.

Medical student reflects on time spent in Mistissini

As a medical student at McGill University, I knew I would go to Mistissini for my rural family medicine rotation in January. Besides the wintry weather, I was not sure what else I would find there. I was excited to learn as much as I could while giving back to patients and the community in general. The day of my arrival, while in the taxi from Chibougamau to Mistissini, sharing the ride with healthcare professionals who were also new to the Cree Territory eased my anxiety. Experienced and rookies alike, everyone was very excited about this opportunity.

Dr. Justin Ross welcomed me that first afternoon. He is the McGill Family Medicine Mistissini Site Director for under- and postgraduate medical education and has been working at the Mistissini Community Miyupimaatisiiun Centre (CMC) for four years as a staff member, having rotated there as a trainee. While explaining the expectations, he emphasized that as students we were there to learn and not to "run the show", in contrast to the academic hospitals in Montreal where so much relies on the students and residents. He mentioned that the only challenge of being in Mistissini is to be away from the family. Many doctors find it to be the hardest part of working in remote communities. However, he assured me that there are no professional downsides and that he is very passionate about working at the CMC.

I also met Dr. Rosy Khurana, who has worked in Mistissini for more than 10 years. As chief of medical services at the CMC, she believes that there is added value in having medical students exposed to Indigenous culture, issues and health. She told me that "The relationship between the specialist and the patient is completely different because that doctor understands the context where that patient comes from. It makes a huge difference in terms of the care that you can offer and the psycho-social aspect of an illness that can make a tremendous change."

According to Dr. Ross, the program creates a link between the community and students at McGill by helping them to build cultural sensitivity towards patients, and that having trainees is probably the most important source of recruitment for doctors in the Cree Territory.

Dr. Khurana feels that she and her patients walk a journey together and that unlike in urban communities, they have deeper connections with the patients here. She said that it "is not always about medicine, sometimes it's sitting down with an adolescent and planning what they want to do in five years." Dr. Ross said that sometimes doctors get invited to family events. Once he was asked to speak at a patient's funeral whose family he knew very well, something he thought he would never do; in Mistissini, it fosters trust between the doctors and the community.

Regarding healthcare, one of the most significant challenges in the community is the burden of chronic illnesses, such as metabolic syndrome (obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes). Dr. Khurana believes this is a global phenomenon, not exclusive to Indigenous communities, but acknowledges it is more prevalent among First Nations. However, the way the CMC treats patients is different from the city approach. They work in collaboration with nurses, other healthcare professionals, Indigenous knowledge keepers, and patients.

"I'm not here to tell someone what to do but to inform, and we make a decision together," said Dr. Ross. He considers it essential to empower the patients to choose, as long as it is safe and doesn't pose risks to them. There are also formal programs that try to incorporate Indigenous medicine for the patients of the clinic.

Dr. Khurana said she was honoured when three patients confessed that she had been the first person to whom they opened up about their residential-school experience, calling it a reflection of the trust people develop with time. "As a doctor, what people want is for you to respect them, it doesn't matter if you are Indigenous or not; it is really about the care that you offer," she said.

In Mistissini I felt very welcomed, and everyone inside and outside of their beautiful clinic, Indigenous or not, was very kind and warm. The only noticeable mismatch was the absence of First Nations physicians working at the CMC, a fact that both Dr. Ross and Dr. Khurana recognize. Even though there have been three Indigenous medical students who rotated in Mistissini, it is still a challenging situation. "I see myself as a placeholder. This isn't my land but I'm here to help, and I'm looking to be replaced by somebody from the community," said Dr. Ross.

They do what they can to encourage the youth to go into healthcare professions. "If someone feels very motivated, we allow them to shadow us, and we give them advice," declared Dr. Khurana.

Personally, I had one particular experience with a school-aged patient. He was very energetic and a bit tired of being with me. While still in the examining room, I playfully let him use my stethoscope and asked him if he could hear my heartbeat. His answer was an enthusiastic nod while his eyes were shining brighter and brighter.

As I left the Cree Territory one month after my arrival, I was looking at the sunset from the airplane, pondering everything I had received, on how welcoming the people were under those starry nights, and how the fiery red of that sky would be an everlasting reminder of the calling from that magic land.

STAYING ON MESSAGE

AFN's Special Chiefs Assembly recap

by Dan Isaac

Photo by Ben Powless

With the number of Indigenous issues making national headlines in recent months –such as the Colten Boushie verdict, the Kinder Morgan protest, and the papal non-apology – staying focused can be a daunting task at Assembly of First Nations meetings. The other challenge is giving everything on the agenda due attention.

Day one of this year's Special Chiefs Assembly, held May 1-2 in Gatineau, saw federal opposition leaders address the assembly, a session on modern treaties and an address from federal ministers Mélanie Joly and Carolyn Bennett. Then the congregation of chiefs and proxies witnessed a first for the AFN.

The Chiefs Committee on Languages took to the floor and addressed Heritage Minister Joly in their traditional languages. For the first time in the AFN's history their questions were translated for the minister in real time.

The sheer volume of files and issues in the AFN's mandate is staggering, yet many criticize the organisation for overstepping boundaries. This became apparent following a conflict that erupted during day one.

Mohawk Elder and activist Kahn-Tineta Horn stole the microphone from a chief and declared the AFN had no right to speak for her as a sovereign citizen, an echo of a similar controversy during the AFN's December meeting.

Later on, even National Chief Perry Bellegarde acknowledged the frustration many feel toward the organization when referencing his time as chief of his own community. But still they soldiered on.

By the afternoon of day one, when NDP leader Jagmeet Singh and Conservative Party leader Andrew Scheer addressed the assembly, almost everyone was wearing "Justice for Colten" buttons. Boushie's family members were in attendance and asked, on day two, to join the executive on stage during the Criminal Code Reform portion of the agenda.

The motion passed unanimously with a standing vote. Then, in a cathartic show of respect, the family of Colten Boushie was wrapped in blankets on stage and honoured by the AFN in a ceremony.

Day two saw Prime Minister Trudeau take centre stage. While the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion was on the minds of many, both the chiefs and Trudeau seemed to sidestep the issue. He stayed on message and honed in on federal legislation, wowed the crowed with topics focused on the rights and recognition framework as well as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Trudeau spent a lot of time answering questions and even wore the raincoat, gifted to him by the AFN, before leaving the meeting.

Day two also saw Grand Chief Shelia North Wilson announce that she would enter the race for National Chief of the AFN to held this July.

In a **cathartic show of respect**, the family of Colten Boushie was wrapped in blankets on stage and honoured by the AFN in a ceremony.

Fear and loathing

The message at the Women's Show was clear – don't age

Photo and Story by Amy German

Billed as "The Ultimate Girls Day Out," the National Women's Show was jam-packed with vendors and presenters trying to sell their goods and services to the thousands of women that flocked to the April 20-22 event to sample, savour, get makeovers or shop to their heart's content.

But, did the event live up to its hype? That depends on what you like.

Never in my life have I encountered so many representatives from plastic-surgery clinics talking about procedures, both invasive and non-invasive, using lasers, freezing (cryotherapy), and even vacations to Tunisia for cheaper surgical procedures. Maybe it was because I am pushing 40, but it felt like that these vultures were preying on women's insecurities about aging. I couldn't take a step without a rep talking to me about Botox for my crow's feet or laser therapy, the new Botox.

easy day Pads, **Pure Romance** vibrator and enhancement cream

I can't say my visit was great for my confidence, but there were some good finds.

My personal favourite was "Easy Day", a pad that can be used for both menstruation and incontinence. I`ve never seen something so absorbent. The rep pulled out a pad, poured a quarter cup of water on it and then handed it to me. It felt dry as a bone. The product was breathable and had a mineral-based substance in its core that killed off bacteria, thus eliminating odour. If I saw this product in a store, I would buy it, hands down. For more info: www.easyday.ca

For the woman looking for the next Younique, Tupperware or Princess House, Pure Romance was pitching its own brand of small, pyramid-type businesses for women to sell lingerie, sex toys and accessories. Like the others, its marketing approach is similar – invite your girlfriends over for a few glasses of wine and then sell them items from the catalogue. For more info: https://www.pureromance.com

The show's message was very clear – **don't get old, don't get fat**, stick stuff on your head to look pretty and if that doesn't work, get surgery.

My favourite weird and creepy product this year was the Quantum Wave, which was being presented by Cindy Robin.

"This is cold laser with a scalar wave technology," she told the crowd gathered at her booth. "It basically takes your body and unwinds all of the stress. It works for pain, inflammation, circulation and it is anti-aging. The Quantum Wave shifts your body from being sympathetic to parasympathetic so from being super stressed out to being super blissed out. It is a great way to start and end your day. Plus, you can use it on your pets!"

No, I did not try it out. It reminded me too much of those e-readers from Scientology. If it were worth anything a pharmaceutical company would have been selling them already.

Having visited this show 10 years ago, one major change is the large number of sex toys being sold. The entire event was a weird bombardment of make-up, lean health-food products (because we all should be skinny), clothes to make women look thinner, vibrators, jewellery and accessories, and cosmetics to make you look younger.

It was at times titillating but ultimately not life-changing. I didn't drop a dime on anything because there was nothing that jumped out or that I absolutely needed.

The show's message was very clear – don't get old, don't get fat, stick stuff on your head to look pretty and if that doesn't work, get surgery. If you want travel to Tunisia for some discount work – I'm not judging – the website is www.medcare-vacances.ca

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Heading home

A Cree Gentleman follows Tshkabesh to Europe

Photos and Story by Ndiamon

My father was a great storyteller. He wouldn't announce which story he was to tell like many others with this talent. He'd be lying on the couch in the quiet of our home and out of the blue, he would begin…

Tshkabesh was invited to cross the great sea to Europe. He was told he could find everything he could dream of there. Tshkabesh, being Tshkabesh, was always curious. He of course accepted, and set sail to where the sun rose. Little did the English know that he had once snared the sun, covering the world in darkness.

Finally, land was spotted. As they got close, he lifted the massive anchor, jumped overboard and pulled the ship right up onto the beach.

He was invited to dine at a tavern. "What will it be, Mr. Tshkabesh?" "I'll have moose tongue." "We don't have that." "Then I'll have beaver tail." "We don't serve that." "Sigabon?" No. He listed other favourite dishes of his but they weren't on the menu.

"Ahh!" exclaimed Tshkabesh, "I was told there was everything here! Then I'll have a bottle of your finest vintage. Red. Bring it to me unopened, I'll suck the cork out myself." Tshkabesh was a badass.

Okay… okay, the line about the wine is mine. But that's pretty much the way my father told it.

I too was invited to visit Europe, to present the Rezolution Pictures film, Reel Injun. Part of Europe looked and felt exactly like home – Inari, in northern Finland where the Sami people live. Even the food was similar. I had dinner one night at an Elder's home where he served reindeer stew – meat that came from his own small herd. So, I felt I hadn't yet reached Europe and I went home.

Months later, while in Seoul, South Korea, I received a Facebook message from my friend Chris Eyre, the director of Smoke Signals. "Do you want to come with me to Croatia?" he asked.

Quickly checking my social calendar, I announced that I would in fact be able to squeeze him in. I'll see you there! Zagreb, the Croatian capital, was not exactly Paris but it would do nicely.

After checking into the hotel, I found I hadn't packed anything semi-formal. A social faux pas, it appeared, because a dinner had been organized for some other social unction and I'd been invited. I walked into the fancy dining room wearing my ripped, faded jeans and was seated at a table with complete strangers. Chris had missed a connecting flight so he wasn't there to watch my back. There was a woman seated to my left and we exchanged pleasantries. It was all very pleasant, as pleasantries usually are, and the food was good. I had learned from Tshkabesh that they didn't have moose tongue in Europe so I didn't bother asking for it.

After dinner, Tim, my host, told me that the woman I'd been talking to was the President's spokesperson. That would be the equivalent of sitting next to Kellyanne Conway at a dinner in Washington, DC, except she wouldn't be lying her way through the last course.

Chris finally stepped off the plane, looking like crap, but happy to have made it. After our adventures in the capital, we moved on to Osijek, a small city near the Serbian border where some of the fiercest battles had taken place when Yugoslavia was breaking up in the early 1990s.

Osijek is a beautiful city, despite lingering signs of the war pockmarked on its buildings. Before I left Montreal, friends had warned, "Don't talk about the war." But I found that many wanted to share their experiences. Bombs exploding, sniper fire, blood on the streets, living in basement shelters. But that's a story for another time.

The University of Osijek had organized the screenings of Reel Injun, which offered the opportunity to meet

with a few students at a nearby bar. The rumours were true. Eastern Europeans are fascinated with all things Native American. They wanted to know everything about the Cree – their culture, their history, their cuisine, spiritual beliefs and the language.

They asked if I spoke Cree and when I told them I did, one asked, "Can you say something for us in your language!?" I thought for a moment before saying, "I am a Cree so I know my language. But then again, I could be lying to you and I'm now just speaking gibberish and you wouldn't even know it."

They asked if I spoke Cree and when I told them I did, one asked, "Can you say something for us in your language!?" I thought for a moment before saying, "I am a Cree so I know my language. But then again, I could be lying to you and I'm now just speaking gibberish and you wouldn't even know it."

"What did you say?" one of them asked, leaning in, extremely curious. I translated. They laughed and nodded in agreement.

The students showed me the local nightlife; the old city square filled with bars. Finally, the bars closed and we went on and lingered awhile on the ancient ramparts but the night wasn't over yet.

We ended the night at the only bar still open, at an old railway station, followed by a motorcycle ride through the city.

The night after the film screening, Sanja Runtic, a professor of Native American literature at the University of Osijek, approached me and asked, "Would you like to go to Montenegro?" I replied, "Let me think about it. Yes!"

Little did I know that such an impulsive answer would change my life, yet again.

The morning of my scheduled departure for Montenegro I woke up thinking, "I don't want to go. I'm not going."

I had been living out of my suitcase in airports and hotels for two years. I also started having recurring dreams of frightening things happening to the airplanes I was on. While sweating out my sins from the night before in the bath, I had a guilty change of heart. My ticket had already been paid for. People were interested in the lives of Native people there. I might not be the preferred representative or the best ambassador, but if I didn't go, I might miss something.

I quickly packed my bags, grabbed my smallest camera and rushed to the airport, late as usual. When I got there – a miracle! I found I was five hours early for my flight. I grew suspicious. Wait a minute, what's happening to me? Why am I early? I usually boarded with my heart racing and sweat dripping off my forehead, looking like some kind of freak. Seatmates would perceptibly edge away from me as I sat down.

But not this time. I walked into the plane calm, cool and collected and only slightly tipsy. My seatmate did not recoil in disgust. Instead, he asked, "Where are you headed?"

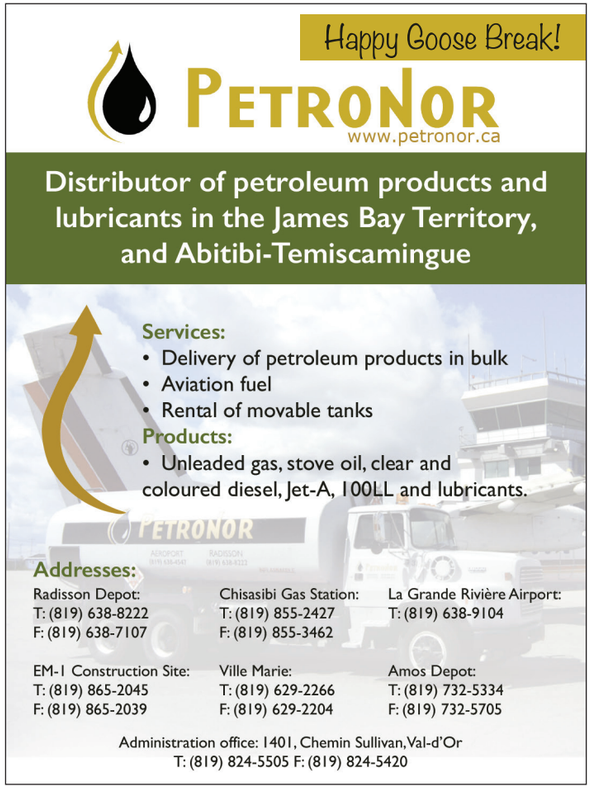
"Home," I replied.

"Where's that?"

"I don't know yet."

After an agonizing, five-hour stay at Belgrade's Nikola Tesla Airport, we descended into Montenegro at dusk. It was barely visible. By the time we sped up the mountains towards Nikši all I could make out were dim lights off in the distance. I found myself lost.

Thus began my long trek. I had planned a seven-day stay. It quickly turned into seven years. And so, our story begins…



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Runners-up

by Sonny Orr

Rez Notes

A good friend of mine used to say that being second best is like being the first. Looking at the tail end of the winner is somehow satisfying knowing that you were at least in the top three. The winner gets their rightly earned title while the rest of us get bragging rights to tell our grandchildren. Let's say that you were the second-fastest sprinter in the world; sooner or later, the winner might pass on and voilà, you become the fastest runner in the world by default. It's a long wait for some to become the best if you have to wait for someone to die first. But hey, it happens.

For example, let's take the former world-class athlete Bruce Jenner. For some time he was the best male athlete in the world, winning at the Olympics and world championships. Then he changed his gender. Does that make his accomplishments moot or do they still count? Bad example, I guess.

How about the teams who lose in the Stanley Cup finals? Are they remembered in the same way as the winning team? Who came in second last year? For those who do remember, it's good to know that their memories are right up there with the winners of memory tests and spelling bees around the world.

Aside from those who win and those who always come in second – like yours truly at awards ceremonies when it comes to writing this column year after year – it might be good to see some things come to an end. Take the longest war in modern times, the war between North and South Korea. It just ended with some friendly handshaking between a wary leader of the south and a despot of the north.

> One day, **I shall be the best** at something and what little glory I gain to bask in, will be enough for me.

Yes, Kim Jong-un finally threw in the towel. Now he'll be remembered as the one who decided to bring his people back to the world of the free and most likely statues of him will be erected in the cutest way. I'd say his hairdo is pretty cute for a world leader, don't you? And the real winner, who didn't really say too much in a diplomatic way, the Donald of course, will just have to stand by and not take any. Meanwhile, Ronald Reagan will always be credited for helping tear down the Berlin Wall and reunite Germany.

In our Cree world, we used to have the world's biggest dams in our backyard, but now that title belongs to China with the Three Gorges dams. We also were the first to have Canada's modern-day treaty, but now other First Nations are successfully negotiating and coming to terms with development and inequitable treatment from governments. But hey, we were the first. That should be remembered with our own holiday to commemorate those historic times.

I for one, probably won't be remembered for anything as glorious as bringing world peace or ending world hunger, or even for bringing down a record number of geese with one shot. I prefer to be the second best at anything. Like making the second-best pizza dough, after your momma's of course, or being the second-best columnist, or being the second-oldest in my class, or being a second-class citizen. But, hey, that leaves room for expansion and growth, while leaders have nowhere else to go except to lose their beloved titles at being simply the best.

One day, I shall be the best at something and what little glory I gain to bask in, will be enough for me.

UTNS

Under the Northern Sky

The world is **waiting for them**

by Xavier Kataquapit

I am thrilled to see posts on Facebook showing that members of my family from the James Bay coast are reaching out and traveling the world. Right now my niece Brianna Wesley is with her friend Clarice Friday in Japan. This is Brianna's first big international adventure and she seems to be loving every minute of it. Her friend Clarice has done a lot of travelling over the past few years so I know they are a good team.

Of course I realize her parents, my sister Janie and her husband Brian, along with siblings April, Marissa and Willie are all concerned for her safety in travelling so far away but I trust Brianna's judgment and I understand that Japan is a good place to start with international travel. I was only in the country for a day but I have researched it and find that the Japanese culture is proud and organized with a vast history. I also realize that the Japanese hold Native Canadians in high esteem and they have a big interest in our culture.

It makes me feel great to see Brianna heading out into the world, discovering new cultures, eating new foods, seeing many beautiful sites while making new friends. I remember how exciting it was when I first started to travel with more than 20 years ago. The international airports were huge and it felt great to be part of the travel world. I loved air travel back then a lot more because it was new to me to be flying in huge jets at 30,000 feet for hours. I was amazed that I could leave northern Ontario and head to Toronto and then get on an aircraft and travel anywhere in the world.

I was amazed that I could leave northern Ontario and head to Toronto and then get on an aircraft and travel **anywhere in the world**

I had to learn how to research and produce a travel agenda and budget so that I knew where I was going, where I was staying, what it took to get around regarding transportation and what kind of budget I had to stick to. This was all very exhilarating and a lot of fun.

It amazed me that I could find so much information on the internet before embarking on a voyage. I studied the best tourist visits, the history of the countries and the people I planned on seeing and any issues or problems that I might encounter. There was a lot of work involved and sometimes my travel plans did not work out or I did not plan well enough and I ended up in challenging situations. For instance, a friend and I arrived in Rome on Easter Sunday without a hotel booking. That meant that we had to wait around a railway station for hours trying to locate a room for the night. As luck would have it we found one with the help of an on-location travel agent.

Another time we landed in Milan without a hotel booking on a weekend when the city was hosting a fashion event. I did not realize Milan is the fashion capital of the world. All the hotels were booked and we ended up spending the night on the street outside the central station. It was a very scary night until a Sardinian man came in late for the train and also found himself with us on the street. He was a tough and savvy man who came to our rescue and showed us how to protect our bags while chasing muggers away from our space. Later we were joined by a group of Chinese men who all knew forms of martial arts and helped us further protect our space. What a night! We were all very happy when the train station opened its doors in the early morning and we grabbed a train to Venice.

Right now, another niece, Naila, and her mom Christine are travelling in Spain, visiting Barcelona and other parts of the country. This incredible mom-and-daughter team has a wealth of travel knowledge as the two have been to many places in the world. I know they are having a great time and taking care of each other while my brother Lawrence (their husband and dad) finishes up his work back in Attawapiskat.

I am always encouraging First Nation people to travel if they can. I am a big believer in education through travel. I know that over the next few years many young First Nation people will be heading out to see the world and I encourage them to do so in a safe and organized manner. The world is waiting for them.

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